

Dark Hollow

By Anna Katharine Green
Illustrations by C. D. Rhodes
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SYNOPSIS.

A curious crowd of neighbors invade the mysterious home of Judge Ostrander, county judge and eccentric recluse, following a veiled woman who proves to be the widow of a man tried before the judge and electrocuted for murder years before. Her daughter is engaged to the judge's son, from whom he is estranged, but the murder is between the lovers. She plans to clear her husband's memory and asks the judge's aid. Deborah Scoville reads the newspaper clippings telling the story of the murder of Algernon Etheridge by John Scoville in Dark Hollow, twenty years before. The judge and Mrs. Scoville meet at Spencer's Polly and she shows him how, on the day of the murder, she saw the shadow of a man, wearing a stick and wearing a long peaked cap. The judge engages her and her daughter Reuther to live with him in his mysterious home. Deborah and her lawyer, Black, go to the police station and see the stick used to murder Etheridge. She discovers a broken knife-blade point embedded in it. Deborah and Reuther go to live with the judge. Deborah sees a portrait of Oliver, the judge's son, with a black band painted across the eyes. That night she finds in Oliver's room, a cup with a peak like the shadowed one, and a knife with a broken blade-point. Anonymous letters and a talk with Miss Weeks increase her suspicions and fears. She finds that Oliver was in the ravine on the murder night.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

She had rather have died, nay, have had Reuther die, than to find herself forced to weigh and decide so momentous a question.

For, however she might feel about it, not a single illusion remained as to whose hand had made use of John Scoville's stick to strike down Algernon Etheridge. How could she have when she came to piece the whole story together, and weigh the facts she had accumulated against Oliver with those which had proved so fatal to her husband?

Deborah shuddered. Aye, the mystery had cleared, but only to enshroud her spirits anew and make her long with all her bursting heart and shuddering soul that death had been her portion before ever she had essayed to lift the veil held down so tightly by these two remorseful men.

But was her fault irremediable? The only unanswerable connection between this old crime and Oliver lay in the evidence she had herself collected. As she had every intention of suppressing this evidence, and as she had small dread of any one else digging out the facts to which she only possessed a clue, might she not hope that any suspicions raised by her inquiries would fall like a house of cards when she withdrew her hand from the toppling structure?

She would make her first effort and see. Mr. Black had heard her complaint; he should be the first to learn that the encouragement she had received was so small that she had decided to accept her present good luck without further query, and not hark back to a past which most people had buried.

"You began it, as women begin most things, without thought and a due weighing of consequences. And now you propose to drop it in the same freakish manner. Isn't that it?"

Deborah Scoville lifted her eyes in manifest distress and fixed them deprecatingly upon her interrogator.

Mr. Black smiled. The woman delighted him. The admiration which she had hitherto felt for her person and the character which could so bravely endure her in twelve short years out of all that was most attractive and bewitching in woman had extended to her mind.

"I called simply from necessity for a gentle response. 'Nothing precious to me than my business. I should but endeavor to further by raising false hopes that is why I have come to you.'"

"I commend your decision. Why should you characterize your hopes as false, just when there seems to be some justification for them?"

Her eyes widened, and she regarded him with a simulation of surprise, which interested without imposing upon him.

"I do not understand you," said she. "Have you come upon some clue? Have you heard something which I have not?"

Mr. Black took two or three crushed and folded papers from a drawer beside him and, holding them, none too plainly in sight, remarked very quietly, but with legal firmness:

"Do not let us play about the bush any longer. You have announced your intention of making no further attempt to discover the man who in your eyes

merited the doom accorded to John Scoville. Your only reason for this— if you are the woman I think you are— lies in your fear of giving further opportunity to the misguided rancor of an irresponsible writer of anonymous epistles. Am I not right, madam?"

Beaten, beaten by a direct assault, because she possessed the weaknesses, as well as the pluck, of a woman. She could control the language of her lips, but not their quivering; she could meet his eye with steady assurance, but she could not keep the pallor from her cheeks or subdue the evidences of her heart's turmoil. Her pitiful glance acknowledged her defeat, which she already saw mirrored in his eyes.

Taking it for an answer, he said gently enough:

"That we may understand each other at once, I will mention the person who has been made the subject of these attacks. He—"

"Don't speak the name," she prayed, leaning forward and laying her gloved hand upon his sleeve. "It is not necessary. The whole thing is an outrage."

His admiration was quite evident. It did not prevent him, however, from saying quite abruptly:

"Men who indulge themselves in writing anonymous accusations seldom limit themselves to one effusion. I will stake my word that the judge has found more than one on his lawn."

She could not have responded if she would; her mouth was dry, her tongue half paralyzed. What was coming? The glint in the lawyer's eye forewarned her that something scarcely in consonance with her hopes and wishes might be expected.

"The judge has seen and read these barefaced insinuations against his son and has not turned this whole town topsy-turvy! A lion does not stop to meditate; he springs. And Archibald Ostrander has the nature of a lion. Mrs. Scoville, this is a very serious matter. I do not wonder that you are a trifle overwhelmed by the results of your ill-considered investigations."

"Does the town know? Has the thing become a scandal—a byword? Miss Weeks gave no proof of ever having heard one word of this dreadful business."

"That is good news. You relieve me. Perhaps it is not a general topic as yet." Then shortly and with lawyerlike directness:

"Look over these. Do they look at all familiar?"

She glanced down at the crumpled sheets and half-sheets he had spread out before her. They were similar in appearance to the one she had picked up on the judge's grounds, but the language was more forcible, as witness these:

When a man is trusted to defend another on trial for his life, he's supposed to know his business. How came John Scoville to hang, without a thought being given to the man who hated A. Etheridge like poison? I could name a certain chap who more than once in the old days boasted that he'd like to kill the fellow. And it wasn't Scoville or any one of his low-down stamp either.

A high and mighty name shouldn't shield a man who sent a poor, unfriended wretch to his death in order to save his own bacon.

"Horrible!" murmured Deborah, drawing back in terror of her own emotion. "It's the work of some implacable enemy taking advantage of the situation I have created. Mr. Black, this man must be found and made to see that no one will believe, not even Scoville's widow—"

"There! you needn't go any further with that," admonished the lawyer. "Have you any idea who this person is?"

"Not the least in the world."

"I ask because of this," he explained, picking out another letter and smilingly holding it out toward her. She read it with flushed cheeks.

Listen to the lady. You can't listen to any one near. What she wants she can get. There's a witness you never saw or heard of.

A witness they had never heard of! What witness? Scarcely could she lift up her eyes from the paper. Yet there was a possibility, of course, that this statement was a lie.

"Stuff, isn't it?" muttered the lawyer. "Never mind, we'll soon have hold of the writer." His face had taken on a much more serious aspect, and she could no longer complain of his indifference or even of his sarcasm.

"You will give me another opportunity of talking with you on this mat-

ter," pursued he. "If you do not come here you may expect to see me at Judge Ostrander's. I do not quite like the position into which you have been thrown by these absurd insinuations. It may even lead to your losing the home which has been so fortunately opened for you. If this occurs you may count on my friendship, Mrs. Scoville. I may have felled you once, but I will not fall you twice."

Surprised, almost touched, she held out her hand, with a cordial "Thank you," in which emotion struggled with her desire to preserve an appearance of complete confidence in Judge Ostrander, and incidentally in his son. Then she turned to go.

The lawyer appeared to acquiesce in the movement of departure. But when he saw her about to vanish through the door some impulse of compunction, as real as it was surprising, led him to call her back and seat her once more in the chair she had so lately left.

"I cannot let you go," said he, "until you understand that these insinuations from a self-called witness would not be worth our attention if there were not a few facts to give color to his wild claims. Oliver Ostrander was in that ravine connecting with Dark Hollow, very near the time of the onslaught on Mr. Etheridge; and he certainly hated the man and wanted him out of the way. The whole town knows that, with one exception. You know that exception?"

"I think so," she acceded, taking a fresh grip upon her emotions.

"That this was anything more than a coincidence has never been questioned. He was not ever summoned as a witness. With the judge's high reputation in mind I do not think a single person could have been found in those days to suggest any possible connection between this boy and a crime so obviously premeditated. But people's minds change with time and events, and Oliver Ostrander's name uttered in this connection today would not occasion the same shock to the community as it would have done then. You understand me, Mrs. Scoville?"

"You allude to the unexpected separation between himself and father, and not to any failure on his part to sustain the reputation of his family?"

"Oh, he has made a good position for himself, and earned universal consideration. But that doesn't weigh against the prejudices of people, roused by such eccentricities as have distinguished the conduct of these two men."

"Alas!" she murmured, frightened to the soul for the first time, both by his manner and his words.

"You know and I know," he went on with a grimness possibly suggested by his subject, "that no mere whim lies back of such a preposterous conclusion as that of Judge Ostrander behind his double fence. Sons do not cut loose from fathers or fathers from sons without good cause. You can see, then, that the peculiarities of their mutual history form but a poor foundation for any light refutation of this scandal, should it reach the public mind. Judge Ostrander knows this, and you know that he knows this; hence your distress. Have I not read your mind, madam?"

"No one can read my mind any more than they can read Judge Ostrander's," she avowed in a last desperate attempt to preserve her secret. "You may think you have done so, but what assurance can you have of the fact?"

"You are strong in their defense," said he, "and you will need to be if the matter ever comes up. The shadows from Dark Hollow reach far, and engulf all they fall upon."

CHAPTER XI.

Changes.

"Reuther, sit up here close by mother and let me talk to you for a little while."

"Yes, mother; oh, yes, mother." Deborah felt the beloved head pressed close to her shoulder and two soft arms fall about her neck.

"Are you very unhappy? Is my little one pining too much for the old days?"

A closer pressure of the head, a more vehement clasp of the encircling arms, but no words.

They were sitting in the dark, with just the light of the stars shining through the upper panes of the one unshaded window. Deborah, therefore, had little to fear from her daughter's eye, only from the sensitiveness of her touch and the quickness of her ear. Alas, in this delicately organized girl these were both attuned to the nicest discrimination, and before the mother could speak Reuther had started up, crying:

"Oh, how your heart beats! Something has happened, darling mother; something which—"

"Hush, Reuther; it is only this: When I came to Shelby it was with a hope that I might some day smooth the way to your happiness. But it was only a wild dream, Reuther; and the hour has come for me to tell you so. What joys are left us must come in other ways; love unblessed must be put aside resolutely and forever."

She felt the shudder pass through the slender form which had thrown itself again at her side; but when the young girl spoke it was with unexpected bravery and calm.

"I have long ago done that, mamma. I've had no hopes from the first. The look with which Oliver accepted my refusal to go on with the ceremony was one of gratitude, mother. I can never forget that. Relief struggled with grief. Would you have me cherish any further illusion after that?"

"Then you will not think me unkind or even untender if I say that every loving thought you give now to Oliver is hurtful both to yourself and to me. Don't indulge in them, my darling. Put your heart into work or into music, and your mother will bless you. Won't it help you to know this, Reuther? Your mother, who has had griefs, will bless you."

"Mother, mother!"

The next morning found Deborah pale—almost as pale as Reuther. Knowing its cause herself, she did not invite the judge's inquiries; and another day passed. With the following morning she felt strong enough to open the conversation which had now become necessary for her peace of mind.

She waited till the moment when her work all done, she was about to leave his presence. Pausing till she caught his eye, which seemed a little loath, she thought, to look her way, she observed, with perhaps unnecessary distinctness:

"I hope everything is to your mind, Judge Ostrander. I should be very sorry not to make you as comfortable as is possible under the circumstances."

Roused a little suddenly, perhaps, from thoughts quite disconnected with



She Held Out Her Hand With a Cordial "Thank You."

those of material comfort, he nodded with the abstraction of one who recognizes that some sort of acknowledgment is expected from him; then, seeing her still waiting, added politely:

"I am very well looked after, if that is what you mean, Mrs. Scoville. Bela could not do any better—if he ever did as well."

"I am glad," she replied, thinking with what humor this would have struck her once. "I—I ask because, having nothing on my mind but house-keeping, I desire to remedy anything which is not in accordance with your exact wishes."

His attention was caught and by the very phrase she desired.

"Nothing on your mind but house-keeping?" he repeated. "I thought you had something else of a very particular nature with which to occupy yourself."

"I had; but I have been advised against pursuing it. The folly was too great."

"Who advised you?"

The words came short and sharp, just as they must have come in those old days when he confronted his antagonists at the bar.

"Mr. Black. He was my husband's counsel, you remember. He says that I should only have my trouble for my pains, and I have come to agree with him. Reuther must content herself with the happiness of living under this roof; and I, with hope of contributing to your comfort."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Foxy Pa. "He is very popular with his wife of late." "And him such a flirt. How does he do it?" "She called him up the other day and said: 'Hello, darling; and he recognized her voice and replied: 'You have evidently made a mistake; I am not your darling. I have the dearest, sweetest, most beautiful wife in the world, and she is the only woman I permit to call me darling!'—Houston Peal.

ITS STATUS. "They tell me you have a new baby at your house, Tilly." "They say it's new, but it's all so creased up, I believe it's second-hand."

UNNECESSARY NOISE. "Dat Rastus Johnson puts ebery cent what he makes on his back." "Yas, an' his money talks out loud, it do."

CALOMEL IS MERCURY, IT SICKENS! STOP USING SALIVATING DRUG

Don't Lose a Day's Work! If Your Liver is Sluggish or Bowels Constipated Take "Dodson's Liver Tone"—It's Fine!

You're bilious! Your liver is sluggish! You feel lazy, dizzy and all knocked out. Your head is dull, your tongue is coated; breath bad; stomach sour and bowels constipated. But don't take salivating calomel. It makes you sick, you may lose a day's work.

Calomel is mercury or quicksilver which causes necrosis of the bones. Calomel crashes into sour bile like dynamite, breaking it up. That's when you feel that awful nausea and cramping.

If you want to enjoy the nicest, gentlest liver and bowel cleansing you ever experienced just take a spoonful of harmless Dodson's Liver Tone. Your druggist or dealer sells you a 50-cent bottle of Dodson's Liver Tone under my personal money-back guarantee that each spoonful will clean your

sluggish liver better than a dose of nasty calomel and that it won't make you sick.

Dodson's Liver Tone is real liver medicine. You'll know it next morning because you will wake up feeling fine, your liver will be working, your headache and dizziness gone, your stomach will be sweet and your bowels regular. You will feel like working; you'll be cheerful; full of vigor and ambition.

Dodson's Liver Tone is entirely vegetable, therefore harmless and cannot sallyate. Give it to your children! Millions of people are using Dodson's Liver Tone instead of dangerous calomel now. Your druggist will tell you that the sale of calomel is almost stopped entirely here.

Circumstantial Evidence.

"Jimmy," said the fond mother to her smart nine year old, "what became of that fruit cake I made for you a treat yesterday? Did you eat it?"

"No, mamma," answered Jimmy, with a grin; "I gave it to the teacher instead."

"That was very nice and generous of you, Jimmy," complimented his mother. "And did your teacher eat it?"

"Yes, I think so," answered Jimmy. "She wasn't at school today."

CARE FOR YOUR HAIR

Frequent Shampoos With Cuticura Soap Will Help You. Trial Free.

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Free sample each by mail with Book. Address postcard, Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

Crushing.

It was the morning after a visit from the Zepps, and a certain street "somewhere in London" was sprinkled with broken glass.

There was the usual crowd of spectators, among whom was a timid-looking man in spectacles, who at last ventured to speak to the constable on duty.

"Is this the result of the air raid?" he asked nervously.

The policeman looked pityingly down at him as he replied: "Well, now, and d'ye think a stone done it?"—Answers.

"Hah Do?"

Among the recruits to Kitchener's army are, of course, many who are ignorant of all military etiquette.

One of these was sitting alone in the messroom when the colonel stalked in. The "Tommy" was seated on the edge of the table swinging his legs and puffing at a cigarette. The only move he made was a jerk of the head, while he grunted something.

"Attention!" he roared. "What do you mean by failing to salute your commanding officer?"

"The recruit was frankly surprised. He even took the cigarette out of his mouth as he answered apologetically: "Nay, ther's no'wt wrong, sir. Ah said 'Hah Do!'"

LACK OF MONEY

Was a Godsend in This Case.

It is not always that a lack of money is a benefit.

A lady in Ark. owes her health to the fact that she could not pay in advance the fee demanded by a specialist to treat her for stomach trouble. In tolling of her case she says:

"I had been treated by four different physicians during 10 years of stomach trouble. Lately I called on another who told me he could not cure me; that I had neuralgia of the stomach. Then I went to a specialist who told me I had catarrh of the stomach and said he could cure me in four months, but would have to have his money down. I could not raise the necessary sum and in my extremity I was led to quit coffee and try Postum.

"The results have been magical. I now sleep well at night, something I had not done for a long time; the pain in my stomach is gone and I am a different woman.

"Every time I had tried to stop coffee I suffered from severe headaches, so I continued to drink it, although I had reason to believe it was injurious to me. But when I had Postum to shift to it was different.

"To my surprise I did not miss coffee when I began to drink Postum. "Coffee had been steadily and surely killing me and I didn't fully realize what was doing it until I quit and changed to Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum comes in two forms: Postum Cereal—the original form—must be well boiled, 15c and 25c packages.

Falling Fast.

"I met Jimmers today. Poor old chap! He isn't long for this world, I'm afraid."

"What makes you think so?"

"He paid me ten dollars that he's been owing me for six years."

Piles Cured in 6 to 14 Days

Druggists refund money if PAZO OINTMENT fails to cure Itching, Blind, Bleeding or Protruding Piles. First application gives relief. See.

About 2,750,000 acres of land in Great Britain are devoted to woods and forests.

New York has 4,500 hotels and restaurants.

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If you, too, are embarrassed by a pimply, blotchy, unsightly complexion, nine chances out of ten

Resinol Soap will clear it

Just try Resinol Soap for a week and see if it does not make a blessed difference in your skin. It also helps to make red, rough hands and arms soft and white.

In severe or stubborn cases, Resinol Soap should be aided by a little Resinol Ointment. Both are sold by all druggists.

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FOR COUGHS, BRONCHITIS, PNEUMONIA

Gowans being more penetrating makes it preferable. You simply rub it on your throat, chest or parts affected and it is absorbed through the skin, stops cough, croup and colds promptly. Relieves pneumonia by reducing congestion and fever. For sale by all dealers in 25c, 50c and \$1.00 bottles. Write for sample and testimonials.

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Malaria or Piles, Sick Stomach, Costive Bowels, Dumb Ague, Sour Stomach, and Itchings; if your food does not assimilate and you have no appetite.

Tutt's Pills

will remedy these troubles. Price, 25 cents.

DIRE POSSIBILITY.

"Do you think your constituents will return you to congress?"

"I don't know. The boys out my way are very well pleased with congress. Maybe they'll come home to punish congress for the way they've been acting."

WRAPPED WITH QUOTATIONS

These should be wrapped and put in one package before Christmas, each package to be the name of the giver and receiver. Let the father play the part of old Santa Claus, and after everybody has retired for the night, must wrap each article in enough paper to make each bundle the same size. A quotation should be written on each package and the name on a separate piece of paper, placed before the receiver of that gift at breakfast table. Each member of the family must hunt for the quotation of his or her